

REMARKS

The Examiner's action dated September 8, 2003, has been received, and its contents carefully noted.

In order to advance prosecution, claims 24 and 27 have been cancelled, claim 33 has been amended to properly depend from claim 32, and claim 18 has been amended to more clearly define the contribution of the invention over the prior art.

The rejection presented in section 6 of the action is traversed for the reason that the applied reference is applicant's own patent, and thus discloses applicant's own invention, and issued less than one year before the filing date of the present application. Therefore, this patent cannot be considered to be prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(a).

The rejection of claims 18-21 and 24-28 as anticipated by Williamson, presented in section 7 of the action, is also traversed.

Claim 18 has been amended to define a network having control means that are operative to establish a selected one of a plurality of operating modes including a data generating mode in which data is generated in a node and transferred only to a selected one of two line couplers, and a repeating mode in which only data received at one of the line couplers is repeated without format change to the other one of said couplers.

In contrast, Williamson discloses a fundamentally different approach to data communication in a network, which involves transmission of data from one module in both directions and relaying of data messages arriving at the module in both directions, column 5, lines 60-68.

Therefore, claim 18 distinguishes over this reference at least by the recitations quoted above.

The rejection presented in section 8 of the action is also respectfully traversed. The nodes disclosed in the applied reference, Blatter, do not include means that are capable of providing a repeating mode. In the component shown in figures 2 and 3 of that reference, an incoming serial data stream is decoded and converted to parallel form before being placed on a data bus 25. If this data is to be conveyed to a subsequent node, it must be placed back in serial form before being transmitting on. This fact is clear from the statements at page 3, line 19, and page 3, line 35 to column 4, line 1, that the transmitter 50R is configured to serialize the data placed on data bus 25 by receiver 20L.

Such a serial-parallel-serial conversion does not represent a repeating function. In the art to which this invention relates, repeating simply involves decoding data in a receiving element and then recoding the data in a transmitting element before sending it on to further

components. The purpose of this function is to compensate for any degradation that the data may have experienced during transmission from a preceding component. There is no change from serial to parallel, and more generally, no change in the data format. Thus, claim 18 now distinguishes over Blatter by its recitation that one of the operating modes produced by the control means is a repeating mode in which only data received at one of the line couplers is repeated without format change to the other one of the line couplers.

This feature of the invention is further defined in claim 28, which includes a positive recitation of a repeater.

It will be noted, in this connection, that in the structures disclosed in the present application there is no parallel bus between a receiver and a line driver, such as elements 44b and 44a in figure 5b of the application drawing.

The rejection presented in section 9 of the action is also traversed, both for the reason that these claims should be allowed along with the claims from which they depend, and for the reason that the systems disclosed in the patents to Markkula and Pesetski differ so fundamentally from those of the primary references that one skilled in the art would have no real motivation to modify the systems of the primary references in accordance with any teachings of the secondary references.

The system disclosed by Markkula does not transfer data from one module, or node, to another and does not include any means for generating data. The system disclosed by Pesetski consists only of repeaters in a digital transmission line and also does not include, at each repeater, any means for generating data. In the unit shown in figure 3 of this reference, each repeater contains its own power supply for generating power that is not sent to other repeaters.

Therefore, one skilled in the art would not find in the totality of the applied references any suggestion or motivation for modifying the system of either primary reference in accordance with the teachings of either secondary reference to arrive at the networks defined in claims 22, 23, 29 and 31.

Concerning the rejection presented in section 10 of the action, claim 27 has been cancelled.

The rejection presented in section 11 of the action is traversed for the reason that the node defined in these claims, and particularly in claim 29, is not suggested by any appropriate combination of the applied references. As the Examiner correctly notes, Caragliano discloses a network for simultaneous communication in both directions. Claim 29, in contrast, is specifically directed to a node that is mode switchable under control of a unit into either one of two

states, each of which allows data to be repeated only in one direction. This is directly contrary to the teachings of Caragliano.

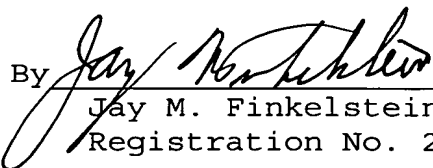
Finally, the rejection of claims 32 and 33 is traversed for the reason that these claims depend from 29 and should be considered allowable along therewith.

In view of the foregoing, it is requested that all of the rejection of record be reconsidered and withdrawn, that the pending claims be allowed and that the application be found in allowable condition.

If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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